15 Words 15c & Farmer Classified Ads & Phone 1208

____ Bv ____* EDWIN BALMER

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"Well, if they're playing that game they'll find two at it, perhaps. Six of our submarines went out submerged a couple of hours ago. They're waiting off to the south. That's why the Pennsylvania's pretending to wait for us. We're giving the subs time to get

"They're starting to withdraw to the Wendell said, his hands inching tight as the forward gun of the Pennsylvania roared again. The enemy's ships indeed were definitely ving off, but not so swiftly as to at once discourage pursuit. They re-mained just beyond or just at the limit of extreme range at which main battern guns might htt, and as the Carige and the two Peras withdrew ells from their turrets continued to purt up spray before the Pennsylva-

That ship forced ahead faster, and ow Bob Wendell felt the Arizona's deck vibrating with the tremor of tur-bines pushed "full speed ahead." The bow wave piled up in a white crest, which spinshed up and over the fore-castle as the great ship dipped. More orny spiattered up as the Arizona, fol-wing the Pennsylvania, altered its surse to the south in pursuit of the

emy's ships. The men of the gun rews, who had been below bathing, re crowding out now upon the forecastle deck. They were nude to the waist, and the hot afternoon sunlight gleamed on the pink and brown flesh of their bodies and sparkled on the

crops of spray splashed upon them. en away on both beams the Ameri-an destroyer—the Cassin and Cum-nings, the Alwyn and Balch and two thers—tossed and tipped as they dashod through the waves on their watch for the enemy's submersibles. Far in the air overhead two American biplanes circled, their wireless sending

nemy submarines had been sighted. Wendell gazed now and then at these liary craft, but the men of the crews, crowding eagerly forward, and everything but the Pennsylvawhich still was firing slowly and dy, one gun from No. 1 turret, now un from No. 2, another gun from 1, again from No. 2. The Arizohe's gun crews pointed in their envy and cried out to one another. Scraps of their exclamations came back to dell on the wind. Puff! Another m fired on the Pennsylvania, and ow, as soon as that could have been clouded, all six guns of the two forard turrets went together in a salvo hich hid for a space of second all the fore part of the ship. At the sight of the great yellow gloud helched before the turrets a cheer burst from the gun crews of the Arizona. The thunder of the salvo came down the wind and welled the cheer into a wild, exultant out from the men below as well as those above. For every one who could or see knew what the salvo meant the Pennsylvania was no longer testing the range; the salve told that she had found it. And in the interval of suspense—suspense after the gas of the powder had puffed and been blown away from the guas after the sound had rumbled be a on the wind to the Arizona—during the slow score of sec-onds while the six great shells must still be in flight toward the enemy's ips officers and men spun about and, with heads bent back, stared at their retop. Would the "spotters" up there splashes of spray this time beside

the Carthage, or would it be "a hit?" The answer boomed in the alarm sounding "general quarters" and the bugies calling all men to battle stations. Leaping at the call, as be and responded a hundred times in eractice, Wendell stepped from the



the turret and the yellow light of the battle lanterns. He took his place et the rear of the guns, and as his men went to their stations he gazed through telescope periscope which let him ook out above the top of the turret

toward the upper works of the enemy's vessels far off to the east. He found himself repeating his directions in a voice not strange, "We fire at the rear ship in the line!"

At his command he felt the mighty

turret revolving slowly beneath him: the turret trainer and the gun pointers, at their places at the periscope sights, were bringing the three monster guns to bear. Every man was trying to be as calm as though the command which had been repeated was simply "Fire at target No. 3." But not even Holt, the turret captain, who had made the record for his ship at the last gun trials on the ranges, was entirely steady. If Wendell were killed there was no other officer in the turret to cceed. The nearest would be Wayne, the ensign, in the handling room below. Holt set his lips and clinched his powerful bands. The heat in the turret was stifling. Fans sucked at the air, but sweat streamed over the bare bodles of the men standing idle-the sight setters, the gunner's mates, the "strikers" and the firing pointer, with the electric buzzer strapped over his bare chest, rising and falling as he panted for breath. The sound of the Pennsylvania's guns came, muffled, into the turret, but envy for the sister ship was gone. The Arizona soon would be in action and would show them. At the call to battle stations the Arizona was only a couple of thousand yards astern the Pennsylvania, which had just come within extreme range of the enemy. But the nemy's ships were withdrawing. Had they begun to flee so fast that the Arizona would not have a shot? "Stand, by!"

Now, "Initial range, twenty thou-sand; deflection, five four."

The voice which first gave it spoke on the telephone circuit; simultaneously the visual signal clicked and the sharp figures in yards and points-"20,000." deflection "5 4"-meant four

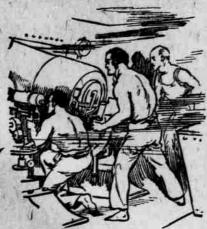
points to the right. A voice, clear and alow, sounding from the speaking tube -which needed no dependence upon electric circuits-repeated the instruc-

But the sight setters, helmeted with the telephone headpieces strapped over their ears, already were making their adjustment. The distance was greater then that at which even first ranging shots might be fired, but the Arizona was closing with the enemy, the Carthage and the two Peras were offering themselves yet, and the range was eres yet, and the range was shortening.

Wendell had beard moments before the rumbling below, which told that in the handling room the shells and the powder bags for his three mighty guns were waiting upon the cars. He turn ed from his periscope as the steel traps to the handling room opened and the ammunition cars came to place behind the open breeches of the guns. The crews, sweating and client, rammed in the monster shells, thrust the great powder bags in behind and closed the breech of each gun. The ammunition cars, empty, dropped below, the trap doors closing above them. At each gun the plugman put in the primer. ready, each separated from the next by a steel bulkhead to limit as much as possible an accident in the turret. A few varie farther forward and low. er the three great pieces of No. 1 turret, too, were ready, their muzzles lifted to extreme elevation toward the

"Range, one, nine, O double O! Deflection five four!" the telephone said. The visuals displayed the figures in black and white again. "Commence firing with one gun!" the order came on the telephone as the sight setters sprang to their sights. The voice tube repeated the order, and the firing pointer, holding his electric button in hand, stooped and strained at his telescope to follow closer the pointing of the guns. Up and down, up and down, up and down, as the waves passed under the ship the deck moved, but as it moved and as the ship steamed for ward and the target ship also moved the trainer and the gun pointers work-ed ceaselessly turning the turret and elevating and lowering the guns to keep the sights steadily "on" the target, but as the firing pointer crouched at his telescope the cross hairs which divided his field of sight rose now above the funnels of the third ship on the horizon. Now, as the gun dropped, too much of the gray, white flecked sea appeared. For a flashing instant only-a frightful infinitesimal of a sec-ond-the faraway funnels, the masts and the bridge of the enemy ship showed exactly in the cross hairs of the sight. At that infinitestimal the gun must fire. The firing pointer better than any one else knew that as he strained, sweating, and fingering his

firing key.
"Bzzzzzz!" The buzzer, hung against his chest now, was sounding the signal to fire. For an interval-measured and noted in the chief fire control station from which the signal came-the buzzer would sound. The firing pointer could choose when during those counted seconds the gun was "on" the target



The Man's Eyes, Glassy In Their Steadiness, Stared Through the Tele-



and he should loose the charge, but if he did not fire while the buzzer still struction from the tops again-the sights must be altered, the gun aimed again, that chance for dealing destruc-

tion be gone. "Bzzzz z!" the buzzezr was still going, but it would not go forever. Had it not been going for-minutes now? Bob Wendell jerked, stiff and strained, toward the firing pointer. He tried to speak, but he could not till he wet his ips; then as he saw the pointer's face the rebuke stayed on his tongue. The gun pointer's face was drawn as in agony, his arms strained and stretched as in torture, his lips moved ceaselessly, soundlessly, and his fingers played with the firing key as a surgeon's taking up a scalpel. The man's eyes, glassy, in their steadiness, stared through the telescope. Too much of the sky was in the field of sight, but now the deck was dropping again and the buzzer still was sounding. The firing pointer's fingers pressed together, and the monster bulk of steel beside him leaped back in recoil, while the air before the turret was yellow nd etherous with blazing gas and the

The firing pointer, falling back as the doors from the handling room opened again and the car came up for the reload, gazed toward Wendell. Bob, counting the score of seconds during which the shell would be in flight, said to himself, "Eight, nine." Then, aloud, "That was right, Louden; fire when you're on the target!" He saw that the gun was reloaded and from his station gazed through his

ship shuddered at the shock of the dis-

If he missed-he and the firing pointer and the turret trainer, the sight setters and the rest, the captain on the bridge, Garry and his men in the

periscope but over the sea.

top, the executive officer in the chief fire control station, the engineers and all the others throughout the ship who lived then only to send shells true and straight from the guns-if they all missed, a spurt of spray would show somewhere ten miles away. If the shell hit, nothing would appear-that was, nothing would show right away. A little later the target ship might show a list or a fire might break out. But in any case Wendell and the crew in the turret who had pointed and fired the gun could scarcely hope to see it. Only Garry and his spotters in the tops would surely see it. Perhaps the captain and the officers in the conning tower might see, but word would come to the turret as an instruction for a correction for the guns if it was a miss, or if it was a hit, "No change!"

"Down five hundred. One right!" That meant a miss, of course. The shell had gore over and splashed in the water. Garry had seen the splash and estimated the miss at five hundred yards. "One right!" That meant that the shell had flown to the stern also. The original estimate had not allowed enough deflection for the speed of the Arizona and the relative speed of the funnels and masts out there ten miles away. But the shell at least had gone over. It had not fallen short. A second shot already was testing the new

range. "Up three hundred!" The range was now "bracketed." A shot at 19,000 yards had gone over. Another at 18,500 had fallen short. The right range was between. The sight setter for the gun which had fired already had altered his sight again. The firing pointer crouched and strained. The buzzer on his breast sounded. The gun leaped back.

(To Be Centinged.)

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